

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
CHARLOTTESVILLE DIVISION**

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BABY DOE, A CITIZEN OF AFGHANISTAN :
CURRENTLY RESIDING IN NORTH :
CAROLINA, BY AND THROUGH NEXT : CIVIL ACTION NO. 3:22-CV-49
FRIENDS, JOHN AND JANE DOE; AND JOHN :
AND JANE DOE, CITIZENS OF AFGHANISTAN:
AND LEGAL GUARDIANS OF BABY DOE, :
: Plaintiffs, :
: :
v. :
: :
JOSHUA MAST, STEPHANIE MAST, RICHARD :
MAST, KIMBERLEY MOTLEY, AND AHMAD :
OSMANI, :
: Defendants, :
and :
: :
UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE :
ANTONY BLINKEN AND UNITED STATES :
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GENERAL :
LLOYD AUSTIN, :
: Nominal Defendants. :
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**MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION TO SEAL
EXHIBIT 4 TO PLAINTIFFS' OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANT RICHARD MAST'S
MOTION TO VACATE PROTECTIVE ORDER**

Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 9 and this Court's Protective Order (ECF No. 26), Plaintiffs seek to file Exhibit 4 to Plaintiffs' Opposition to Defendant Richard Mast's Motion to Vacate Protective Order ("Plaintiffs' Opposition") under permanent seal to protect the safety of Plaintiff Baby Doe. Exhibit 4 to Plaintiffs' Opposition contains Baby Doe's American name given to her

by Joshua Mast and Stephanie Mast, while the Court’s Protective Order (ECF No. 26) requires that she be referred to as “Baby Doe.” In addition, Exhibit 4 to Plaintiffs’ Opposition is a document subject to a sealing order issued by the Circuit Court of the County of Fluvanna. *See* ECF No. 73, Exh. B.

Under the common law right of access to judicial records, documents should be sealed when a party’s interest in keeping the information contained therein confidential outweighs the presumed right of public access. *See, e.g. Stone v. Univ. of Maryland Med. Sys. Corp.*, 855 F.2d 178 (4th Cir. 1988); *Ashcroft v. Conoco, Inc.*, 218 F.3d 288, 302 (4th Cir. 2000). “Courts have recognized that an interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of individuals related to the litigation, including family members and particularly minors, may justify restricting access” to court documents. *United States v. Harris*, 890 F.3d 480, 492 (4th Cir. 2018); *see also United States v. Doe*, 962 F.3d 139, 147 (4th Cir. 2020).

In this instance, this Court recognized the threat to Baby Doe and Plaintiffs in its Protective Order (ECF No. 26). Plaintiffs have publicly filed their Opposition. Thus, the public is not wholly deprived of an understanding of the general underlying factual basis for the request. The relief Plaintiffs seek in this motion is narrowly tailored to the circumstances, and aims to seal only what is absolutely necessary to safeguard the safety of persons related to the litigation. Defendants are not prejudiced as they are aware of Plaintiffs’ identities and are parties to the sealed proceeding.

Accordingly, Plaintiffs request that Exhibit 4 to Plaintiffs’ Opposition be filed under permanent seal, as the risks attendant to public disclosure of these is not likely to dissipate over time.

Dated: March 17, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Maya Eckstein

Maya M. Eckstein (VSB No. 41413)
Lewis F. Powell III (VSB No. 18266)
HUNTON ANDREWS KURTH LLP
951 E Byrd St
Richmond, VA 23219
Telephone: (804) 788-8200
Fax: (804) 788-8218
Email: meckstein@HuntonAK.com
Email: lpowell@HuntonAK.com

Jeremy C. King (*admitted pro hac vice*)
HUNTON ANDREWS KURTH LLP
200 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10166
Telephone: (212) 309-1000
Fax: (212) 309-1100
Email: jking@HuntonAK.com

Sehla Ashai (*admitted pro hac vice*)
ELBIALLY LAW, PLLC
704 East 15th Street
Suite 204
Plano, TX 75074
Telephone: (312) 659-0154
Email: ashai@elbiallylaw.com

Blair Connelly (*admitted pro hac vice*)
Zachary Rowen (*admitted pro hac vice*)
LATHAM & WATKINS LLP
1271 Avenue of the Americans
New York, NY 10029
Telephone: (212) 906-1200
Email: blair.connelly@lw.com
Email: Zachary.rowen@lw.com

Damon Porter (*admitted pro hac vice*)
Ehson Kashfipour (*admitted pro hac vice*)
LATHAM & WATKINS LLP
555 Eleventh Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1304
Telephone: (202) 637-2001
Email: damon.porter@lw.com
Email: ehson.kashfipour@lw.com

Counsel for Plaintiffs

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 17th day of March, 2022, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send a notification of such filing to all CM/ECF participants.

By: /s/ Maya M. Eckstein
Maya M. Eckstein (VSB # 41413)
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP
Riverfront Plaza, East Tower
951 East Byrd Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-4074
Telephone: (804) 788-8200
Facsimile: (804) 788-8218
meckstein@HuntonAK.com

Counsel for Plaintiffs